

REMARKS

Claims 13-29 are currently pending with claims 13 and 24 being independent. The Office Action first indicates that claims 16, 18-20, and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 ¶2 for failing to particularly point out the and distinctly claim the subject matter that is claimed. In response, Applicant has amended these claims, without adding new matter, to address the noted concerns.

Particularly, the Office Action asserts that the phrase “a filling channel” in claim 16 is unclear. The filling channel is introduced on lines 13-17 of page 7 of the specification, and described functionally on page 7, line 23 – page 8, line 3, for example. To clarify this phrase, Applicant has amended claim 16 to further define the filling channel. *See Spec.*, p. 7, ln. 23 – p. 8, ln. 3.

Regarding claim 18, the Office Action also asserts it is not clear how a receiver selectively connects to the second optical transmission fiber or to the optical circulators. Therefore, claim 18 has been amended to clarify that the optical switch selectively connects the receiver. *E.g., Spec.*, p. 11, ln. 6 – p. 12, ln. 2; Fig. 3.

Regarding claims 19 and 20, the Office Action notes the lack of antecedent basis for the phrases, “the receiver” (claim 19) and “the optical switch (claim 20). To address this concern, Applicant has amended claim 19 to replace the term “receiver” with the term “light sensor” appearing in claim 17. Applicant has also amended claim 20 to now depend from claim 18, which recites “an optical switch.”

Regarding claim 27, the Office Action alleges that its language claiming the structure of the network with respect to the second switching fabric does not comport to the structure illustrated in Figure 3. In response, Applicant has amended claims 26 and 27 to identify first and second de-multiplexers. *E.g., Spec.*, Fig. 3.

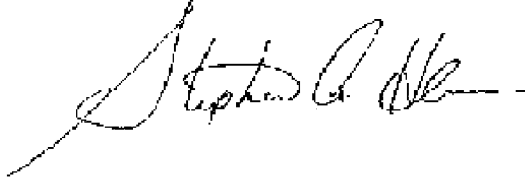
The foregoing amendments do not add new matter. In light of the amendments, Applicant respectfully requests that the §112 rejections be withdrawn.

The Office Action next indicates that claim 13 stands rejected as being obvious over Fatehi (U.S. Pat. No. 6,317,255) in view of Lemus (U.S. Pat. No. 6,111,676), but also indicates that its dependent claim 14 contains allowable subject matter. Therefore, Applicant has amended claim 13 to incorporate the allowed claim 14. Additionally, claims 15 and 18 have been amended to ensure correct dependencies. No new matter has been added.

Finally, claims 24-29 are indicated as being allowed.

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests the allowance of all pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,
COATS & BENNETT, P.L.L.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen A. Herrera", followed by a horizontal line.

Dated: January 21, 2010

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